

Legislation

27 May 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

SUBJECT : Handling of Legislative Matter

1. I wish to clarify any misunderstanding there may be on how pending legislation affecting this Agency is handled from this Office. Under no circumstances has the Office of the General Counsel passed independently on such legislation or taken an Agency position in regard thereto. Any action in regard to the substantive nature of legislation must emanate from the interested Agency office or offices. We stand ready to inform, interpret, or give guidance on the legal aspects and to coordinate various views.

2. A good example is shown in the amendment to the Alien Registration Act which recently came to the Director's attention. We had coordinated for the Agency on the original act in 1950. Late in 1952, Staff C informed us that unforeseen problems had arisen which made it desirable to amend portions of the act. We discovered that the Department of Justice already was proposing amendments of its own, and in January 1953 we wrote to them proposing a change to meet the needs of Staff C. After some interchange, wording was arrived at which was satisfactory to Staff C, ourselves, and the Department of Justice. This is the wording contained in the present bills before the Congress. I was, therefore, able to inform you immediately that this language was satisfactory from the Agency's point of view, as we had specifically made sure that it was satisfactory to Staff C, the sole interested office.

3. Another example coming to the Director's attention had to do with the act to establish the Office of Commissioner of Refugees. We had received the Senate bill in July 1953 and had sent one copy each to the Alien Affairs Office and to [redacted] of the Office of the Deputy Director (Plans). No comment or question has been received from either office since that time. This, of course, raises the question of follow-up. In this

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connection it should be noted that there are currently some 300 bills, at one stage or another of development, of interest to this Agency. All are carded and indexed with the distribution noted. Where a deadline or specific inquiry has come to us, we do perform a follow-up function. On some others where there is an obvious and specific interest or where the legal technicalities may make the substance obscure, we make a point of working with the office concerned. However, on many we cannot readily tell whether the Agency has a direct interest or not and to date have not performed a systematic follow-up after distribution of such bills, as it would be a burdensome process which should be unnecessary.

LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

OGC:LRH:jeb
cc: Legislative Counsel
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